

KentuckyHistoricalSociety

Kentucky Oral History Commission
100 W. Broadway • Frankfort, KY 40601
502-564-1792 • (fax) 502-564-0475 • history.ky.gov
email: Sarah.Milligan@ky.gov

Kentucky Oral History Commission Transcription Grant Application FY09-01

Project Title:	Coal Company Town 1
Project Director / Title:	-----
Address:	-----
City/State/Zip:	-----
Telephone:	-----
Email:	-----

Grantee (fiscal agent):	-----
Address:	-----
City/State/Zip:	-----
Telephone:	-----
Email:	-----

Repository Responsible for Interview Storage and Access	Eastern Kentucky University, Special Collections & Archives
Address:	521 Lancaster Ave., Richmond, KY, 40475-3102

Amount of Grant Request:	\$2208
Project Initiation and Completion Dates:	January 1, 2009 - June 30, 2009
Anticipated Number of Interviews to be Transcribed:	32

Signatures:

Project Director:	Date:
Institutional Official (if applicable):	Title:

Connections. Perspective. Inspiration.

Budget

Commission funds pay only for the stipend to or salary of the transcriptionist Contact the Commission for information on the current maximum allowable rate per hour of taped interview. Please identify and explain the formula for determining stipends/salaries.

Item	Request
Stipends / Salaries: Salary for transcription of 32 interviews at 1656 minutes $1656/60 = 27.6$ hours $27.6 \text{ at } \$80 \text{ per hour} = \2208	\$2208
Total:	\$2208

Refer to the grant program guidelines for further information on how to prepare a transcription grant application. The application must include the following:

1. Project Description - Describe the historical/cultural significance of the interviews to be transcribed. Any anticipated publication, exhibit, or other form of presentation based on the transcripts should also be explained. Maximum two pages.

2. Project Administration - Detail the procedures for carrying out the project. Identify and explain the responsibilities of project personnel. NOTE: The transcriptionist must be identified prior to submission of the application. (Attach vitae of project personnel, maximum of two pages each.)

3. Interviews - Identify interviews by name of the interviewee and give a general description of the overall content.

Letters of recommendation are encouraged, up to a maximum of four.

For technical assistance or grant-related questions, applicants are encouraged to contact the program coordinator at the Kentucky Oral History Commission: Sarah Milligan at sarah.milligan@kv.gov or 502-564-1792 ext 4434

Part I. Project Description

The Coal Company Towns collection consists of 86 interviews and is too large to transcribe with one grant. I plan to submit grants in March and October of 2009 to complete transcribing the entire collection. For this grant, October 2008, I have chosen interviews that highlight two mines which were in close proximity to each other and were owned by the same company, Stearns Coal & Lumber Company. All of the interviews in this grant are with people who lived in either the town of Stearns or Blue Herron. There was also an effort to include multiple interviews by the same person even if the topics concerned a different mine.

The topics of these interviews are everyday life in the company coal towns and strikes during the 1970's. When listening to or reading their own stories of their lives and what different aspect of everyday life in coal towns such as school, transportation, dating, and recreation, means to them it can give a picture of the social and cultural aspects of an important place and time period in Kentucky history.

These interviews also discuss working conditions in the mines and strikes which can shed light on the operations of the Union, the motivations of the mine workers as well as owners during a pivotal time in the history of the coal industry.

The coal industry has had an enormous impact on the history, economy, and culture of Kentucky. It is important to understand how the people who lived in the coal company towns viewed their own situation in order to understand their motivations in everyday life and their working life. This in turn can help us to better understand the history and culture of coal company towns.

Part II. Project Administration

_____, oral historian specialist for the Boone County Public Library and Kentucky Community Scholar will be responsible for the implementation and completion of all grant requirements including final editing, transcription, and transcription oversight.

_____ will be the primary transcriptionist for this {resume attached}.

Transcriptionists will be following Kentucky Oral History Guidelines and Standards. The transcriptionists own a cassette transcription machine. _____ has varying experience as an oral history transcriptionist through her work caring for the collections, old and new, at the Boone County Public Library (see attached sample transcription).

An excel spreadsheet will be used to keep track of the workflow status of each interview transcription. The completed transcriptions will be turned in to Beth Shields at Kentucky Oral History Commission and Debbie Whalen at Eastern Kentucky University as they are completed. I will keep copies on my computer until I have confirmation that the entire grant is completed satisfactorily.

Part III. Interviews

The Coal Company Towns collection consists of 86 interviews and is too large to transcribe with one grant. I plan to submit grants in March and October of 2009 to complete transcribing the entire collection. For this grant, October 2008, I have chosen interviews that highlight two mines which were in close proximity to each other and were owned by the same company, Stearns Coal & Lumber Company. All of the interviews in this grant are with people who lived in either the town of Stearns or Blue Herron. There was also an effort to include multiple interviews by the same person even if the topics concerned a different mine.

The condition of these interviews is good with the exception of interview number twenty-two, Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Slaven. This interview has a notation of possible audio difficulty. I have included this interview because it is the second interview with Mr. Slaven.

The length of seven interviews has been estimated at 45 minutes each. These tapes will be timed and the number of interviews to be transcribed will be adjusted if necessary.

number	Narrator	Topics	Minutes	EKU id number
1	Boyatt, Harvey	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Mine 18, Education, Recreation, Miners, Mining	53	1984 OH 072
2	Boyatt, Harvey	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Personal Background, Mining, Stearns, Mining Accident, Blue Heron Church	76	1984 OH 075
3	Cooper, Lester	Coal Towns, family, 1929 flood, Comargo, Stearns Lumber Co., schools, Boy Scouts, Belle Farm, Worley, Co-op, social attitudes, mine deaths	60	1981 OH 100
4	Curls, Jan	Personal History, Coal Camps, Blue Herron, Education, Marriage, Stearns' Coal Company	39	1978 OH 509
5	Curls, Jan	Co-op, minter appearance, Blue Huron, Games Played in Co-Op, marriage in Coal Camps, Stearns, Clothing	52	1983 OH 041
6	Curls, Jan	Co-op, miner appearance, Blue Heron, recreation, company store, church, Frank Thomas, McCreary County, doctors, schools	69	1981 OH 117
7	Dobbs, Lynda	Coal Towns, Stearns, and Co-op mine, McCreary County	30	1981 OH 097
8	Douglas, James	Blue Diamond Coal, Strike, Mining, Stearns Coal Mine, McCreary County Miner's Union, United Mine Worker's Union, Picket Lines. Southern Laborer Union, Justus Mine, Mine Safety	*45	1997 OH 034
9	Fugate, George	Coal Towns, Personal Background, Normal School, Consolidated Coal Company, Lumber Shipping, Jenkins, Segregation In Jenkins, Changes in Eastern Kentucky Between 1920 and 1950, Mining Machines, Unions, strikes, Blacks in Jenkins	32	1983 OH 039
10	Gable, Robert	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Stearns Company, United Mine Workers Strike, Miners, Mine Safety Act, Clean Air Act, Justice Mine, Mining	128	1985 OH 118

11	Hines, Randell	Blue Diamond Coal, Steams Coal Mine, Strike, Mining, Mine Safety, Justus Miner's Association, United Mine Worker's Union, Picket Lines, Police Response, Negotiations, Southern Labor Union	*45	1997 OH 035
12	Jones, Joe	Blue Diamond Coal, Stearns Coal Mines, Mining, Mine Safety, Strike, McCreary Miner's Union, United Mine Workers Union, Picket Lines, Southern Labor Union, Justus Mine	*45	1997 OH 036
13	Kidd, Bobby	Blue Diamond Coal, Stearns Coal Mine, Mining, Mine Safety, Strike, United Mine Worker's Union, Picket Lines, Storm Security, Police Response, Gordon Bonneman, Justus Mine, Scotia Mine	*45	1981 OH 137
14	Ledbetter, Gertie	Blue Heron Coal Camp, Mine 18, Personal Background, Fidelity, Strike, Miners	30	1983 OH 078
15	Ledbetter, Gertrude	Coal Camps, Blue Heron	12	1984 OH 054
16	Parsons, Clifford	Personal Background, Kenvir Coal Camp, Black Mountain School, Harlan City, Snake Handling Church Services, EKU, Mine Violence, Strikes	47	1981 OH 129
17	Pryor, Bill	Blue Heron Coal Camp, Stearns	30	1983 OH 080
18	Pryor, Bill	Blue Heron Coal Camp, Mine 18, Personal Background, Different Positions He Held In Coal Mining Camps, Blue Heron Quartet, Schools	67	1983 OH 079
19	Reynolds, Billy	Stearns Coal Mine, 1976 Strike, United Mine Worlers Union, Mining, Mine Safety, Picket Lines, Police Response	*45	1997 OH 033
20	Ritchie, Juanita	Coal Towns, McCreary County, Berea College, Steams Coal Mine, doctors, schools, harmon family, recreation, chores, power structure	105	1981 OH 095
21	Slaven, Joseph	Personal Background, Military Service, Army, Camp Taylor, Steams Coal Company, Coal Mining, Hostler, United Mine Workers, McCreary Miners, Blue Herron, Retirement, Justice Mine, Mining Camps, Mining Accidents, Robbing Coal Mines, Strike Violence	60	1978 OH 465
22	Slaven, J.C., Mr. & Mrs. (side one inaudible)	Stearns Coal Mine, family, brother killed at Co-op, schools, transportation, script, company towns, movies, baseball, church, religion, recreation, United Mine Workers Union	60	1981 OH 098
23	Smith, Mary	Coal Towns, Personal Background, C rummies. Crummies Creek Coal Company, High School in Crummies, Camps Doctors, Labor Problems in Crummies, Recreational Activities at School	51	1983 OH 042
24	Smith, Mary	Personal Background, Crummies Coal Town, Harlan, Strikes, Deaths During Union Problems, Miner's Pay Deductions, Young Girls Marrying	60	1981 OH 137

25	Thomas, Frank, Dr.	Stearns Coal Mine, Blue Diamond Coal, Mining, Mine Safety, Strike, McCreary Miner's Union, Scotia Mine, Justus Mine, Southern Labor Union, United Mine Worker's Union	*45	1997 OH 038
26	Thomas, Frank	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Dentistry, Stearns Coal Company, Bob Steams	60	1984 OH 086
27	Thomas, Frank	Coal Camps, Blue Heron	26	1985 OH 119
28	Tucker, Rita	Coal Camps, Steams	*45	1985 OH 027
29	Vaughn, Hobert & Trueie	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Stearns Company, Family, Housing, Mine 18, Blue Heron Quartet, Church, Sermons	66	1984 OH 084
30	Waters, Henley	Coal Camps, Whittling Knives, Worley, Mine 18, Beech Grove School, Mining, Fidelity, Stearns	72	1983 OH 081
31	Waters, Henley	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Mining, Stearns	51	1984 OH 061
32	Wilson, Gerald	Coal Camps, Blue Heron, Coal Camp Schools, Steams Company, Co-Op	50	1984 OH 083

Total minutes

1656 estimate = 27.6 hours

Information Withheld

Education

- Bachelor of Independent Studies, specialization in History, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, 42071 May 2007
- Certified Community Scholars, Kentucky Folklife Program, Frankfort, 40601, January 2007
- HIS 594 Oral History Methods, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky, 41099, Spring 2007

Work History

- Local History Associate, Oral History Specialist, Boone County Public Library, Burlington, Kentucky, July 2007 to present
 - Completion of five transcriptions
 - Supervision and editing of two transcription grants, totaling 57 transcriptions
 - Processing and care of the BCPL oral history collection
- Reference Associate, Boone County Public Library, Union, Kentucky, 2000 to June 2007
- Chair of Boone County Oral History Program, 2003 to present

Publications

- *Encyclopedia of Northern Kentucky*, articles (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, forthcoming 2009) Article titles : Bruce Ferguson, Florence, Florence Christian Church, Hamilton, Anderson Ferry (co-written with Paul Anderson)
- *Burlington Images of America* (Arcadia Publishing, 2004) co-written with Matt Becher, Michael Rouse, and Robert Schrage

Public History Projects

- Kiger Re-enactment Group - Producer/Director of seven performances of *The Kiger Play*, 2005 to 2007
- New Haven School 75th Anniversary Project. In a partnership with New Haven PTA, the Oral History group collected interviews, photographs and memorabilia for the celebration, March 2006

Professional Organization Memberships and Awards

- Oral History Association, 2006 to present
- Boone County Historical Society, Vice President, 2005 to 2007
- Preservation Project Award, Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board, May 2006
- Boone County Historic Preservation Review Board , April 2002 to January 2004
- National Genealogical Society, 2000 to 2003

Interview with

Ruth M. Kelly

July 28, 1980

Conducted By Richard Scott Kimmich

Transcribed by _____

**©Kentucky Oral History Commission
Kentucky Historical Society**

Richard Scott Kimmich: Okay, can you give us some background information of what you do know of Boone county.

Ms. Ruth Kelly: What?

RSK: Some background information of Boone county.

KELLY: Do I have any background? I said that Boone county was formed in 1878 and it was formed from a portion of Campbell county. All of Northern Kentucky then was Campbell county and Boone and Kenton were both formed from-but Boone was formed in 1878 and it was the 30th county of the state.

RSK: Okay. And you lived in Boone county all your life?

KELLY: Well, only when I was working away from home. I worked in Washington

D.C. ten years in the Treasury Department for the government. I lived there but this was my legal residence. I came home every year to visit my parents, but other than that I've lived in Boone county all my life.

RSK: What did you do in the Treasury Department?

KELLY: Well I worked [clears throat] in the Register's Office where we took care of all the Registered Bonds and Securities that the government issued from the time of, in memorial when they first begun to issue any Securities in the government. And then I came home when my folks got sick, and I came home and stayed with them for years, as long as they lived and that's when we moved to Burlington from the farm down East Bend Road. And then I got reinstated in Cincinnati back in the Treasury Department, but I worked Internal Revenue for ten years. But I was home every night. Boone county has always been my home.

RSK: What was Boone county like during the First World War?

KELLY: Well it was quite different from what it is now. It was strictly rural. Florence was just a little town with houses on both sides of the street, just one main street that went through Florence, and Walton was larger than Florence was at that time. But the

major part of the county was rural and It remained that way until I'd say fifteen years ago almost when it begun to develop.

RSK: Okay. How did the First World War affect your life?

KELLY: Well, me particularly both of my brothers were in service. I was active in the Red Cross work and sold bonds and stamps and every issue that came out. [Laughing] I was active in all of that. Then after the war was over the American Legion was formed and we had -at that time we had an auxiliary to the American Legion and I was active in that. So I was associated with service men quite a bit.

RSK: In what year did you marry?

KELLY: What'd you say?

RSK: What year did you get married?

KELLY: I never got married.

RSK: You never been married. Okay.

KELLY: No, I've never been married.

RSK: Okay. How did the, how did the Second World War affect your life?

KELLY: What?

RSK: The Second World War, how did it affect your life?

KELLY: Well, I had nephews. My brothers of course were too old for service again, but I had, oh let's see my brother had a one boy in and I think I had, I had two nephews that were in that. And then I had a nephew that was in the Korean War after that. We-our family has been involved in all the wars since that time, in my lifetime.

RSK: How did it affect you as far as food and clothes and stuff like that was concerned?

KELLY: Oh well, we had in World War II we had food stamps for all of our food. We had stamps for some articles of clothing. I know shoes particularly. And, we had to buy with that, I had that when I, that was all in Washington, before I left there and then after I came back here why the war wasn't over for two or three years after I came back, a couple of years after I was home. But we- some articles of food was very scarce and could only be bought with food stamps and some articles of clothing. I can't recall anything right now but shoes, but there may have been other things I'm not right sure.

RSK: Okay. Coming after the Second World War was the Depression, or before that war was the Depression....

KELLY: ... No the Depression was before World War II.

RSK: Right, Okay, before World War II how did the Depression affect you?

KELLY: Well that was, it begun of course, the crash came in '29, but 1930 was when I first went to Washington to work and I was there most of the time during the Depression. But I know a little bit about how it did back here. Jobs were scarce, of course we lived in the country. My father was a farmer and it didn't affect us as badly as it did people that lived in the cities and little towns. We raised all of our own food [Laughing] and had that where we didn't have to-of course it-people always think that the farmers that raise their own food that it don't cost them anything. It does but you didn't lay out money for it and that money was what was so scarce at that time, but it was a rough time. And I know it was rough in Washington because the people were on the street begging when we went to work everyday. I saw businessmen selling apples on the street and all. I know more about it that part of it from my stay in Washington because when I... but it was a hard time.

RSK: What was the-you worked for the government during the Depression?

KELLY: What'd you say?

RSK: You worked for the government during the Depression years?

KELLY: Yes.

RSK: Okay. What was the government-what was your life like as a government employee?

KELLY: What do you mean?

RSK: Well do you consider-do you think that your life was-your thing was easier by the fact that you were a government employee?

KELLY: You think it was easier for me?

RSK: Yes, do you think it was easier for you?

KELLY: Oh, Well in a way it maybe was. I had been a teacher before that. I taught eight years and I got sick and almost had a breakdown and the doctor suggested that I not go back to teaching because it entailed night work and lots of extra-curricular things and suggested that I do something else. Well I was about five years getting well enough to think about doing anything before I got really well. And so I picked up the paper one day and saw they were giving an examination in Cincinnati for 1930 census workers in Washington and I was a glutton for punishment then [Laughing] and I like to take test. So I filed an application and took that test and I got an early appointment and that's how I went to Washington in the first place. I worked in the 1930 census. And that was just day work, when you finish in the daytime your evenings were free and it was better for me in that respect physically. It cramped my style when I first went to work because in my teaching work you could work on your own initiative and create more on your own than you could in the government. And there you had to do in the old cut and dry way but it was an interesting experience and I had never seen Washington and I wanted to. And I explored the city while I was there working and it was an enjoyable experience. But when the census work was completed well then in the meantime I had taken two more examinations, a statistical one and a regular clerical one and I had gotten appointments on each of them and that was-I just remained in Washington. That's ah—and then I didn't want to go back to Washington after my folks were gone and a I just went to Cincinnati one day and went in the Federal Building on some other business and I saw that the Internal Revenue had had an office in that building then, and I went up to the administrative office and talked to them [clears throat] the man at the head of the office. He gave me a job right away and I was reinstated and I worked there until I retired. I've been retired 21 years.

RSK: Okay. Why don't you tell me what Washington-the thing of Washington was like during those years?

KELLY: Well I worked in, of course, in Internal Revenue. Our-we were collecting taxes. And, I worked in the delinquent tax unit where I collected taxes from those people that were delinquent in their payments and all. It's too intricate to go into you know what Internal Revenue income tax is like I worked in different departments, but that was it was clerical work and supervisor work that I did mostly.

RSK: What was transportation like when you came back to Kentucky?

KELLY: Well, when I came back it was just like it had been. Everybody had automobiles and of course when I was going to school I came here to high school. My brother and I rode horseback, or we drove in a horse and buggy. We didn't have an automobile until I was about ready to graduate from high school. Before people begun generally to have automobiles, and after I came back from Washington why everything was just about like it was now. Automobiles were just as plentiful per population unit of course there is more now than there was then but there's more people.

RSK: Okay. How have the roads changed?

KELLY: Well, there weren't too many paved roads. As far back as I can remember, [clears throat] the road from here to Florence was paved all my lifetime. And then it went straight on to Lexington, they called it the Lexington-Pike from Florence then it went. But there weren't too many other the side roads and all were not, were just mud roads until.... oh, the road down to our farm wasn't paved until I was almost through high school I think. But we-you used or they used horse and buggies and of course it really didn't make any difference you got along, you didn't go so fast, but you got along you always got there.

RSK: Okay. How has government changed?

KELLY: What?

RSK: How has the government changed?

KELLY: How did it change?

RSK: Uh Huh, How has the government changed?

KELLY: The county government? Well, I don't know just how to tell you how much it had changed. It was very simply then and not complex like it is now. [Laughing] It wasn't so much a bureaucracy as [Laughing] it is today. We had a sheriff and judge, a county attorney, a jailer and a fiscal court and I think they called them magistrates then that was just it that was just about all. Had a county clerk and a circuit court clerk and that was about all. We didn't have any of these ().

RSK: Okay. What were the April Court Days?

KELLY: [Laughing] Well, my first recollection of that was, I think when I lived out in the country before I came out here to high school I don't know weather I ever came to an April Court Day or not before that but in 19--after 1908 I know about them. Oh everybody came from all over the county. They had-everybody they had fine horses, brought them, and they rode the horses and showed them around like they do in the show rings. And it was just a big day generally, just a get together of people. That was the first Monday in April, County Court Day. But I don't know how it originated, why they[Laughing] It was already being held before I could remember so I can't tell you how it came about but that what it was like and the streets were all blocked almost with people. Nobody wanted to get through though because everybody was here. [Laughing]

RSK: Okay. Do you have anything else you think could possibly help me?

KELLY: No, I don't think, I don't think that would help you any. But [interruption-tape turned off and on] I can't [interruption- tape turned off and on] The day-before Boone county was formed there was a settlement down at Petersburg, Tanner Station. That was about fifteen years, I think, before Boone county was formed. That station was-that was the first settlement in the county was down there. And then they uh-the first historical thing that I ever knew about that happened in Boone county was finding of the fossils of the Mastodons down at Big Bone. Now that was quite a long while, I think that was about 1729, if I remember correctly that those bones were first discovered down there. And that was, see, more than 50 years before the county was formed but that was ... and that's about all that, that I can think of. And that won't....

END OF INTERVIEW



EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
Serving Kentuckians Since 1906

EKU Libraries
University Archives

Libraries Complex 126
521 Lancaster Avenue
Richmond, Kentucky 40475-3102
(859)622-1792

October 3, 2008

Review Committee
Kentucky Oral History Commission
100 W. Broadway
Frankfort, KY 40601

To the Members of the Review Committee:

I am writing in support of _____ transcription grant application for Coal Company Towns. The interviews that she is proposing to transcribe are housed at Eastern Kentucky University, and we would be glad to have the transcripts in order to provide better access to researchers. The coal industry has had a great impact on Kentucky, and these interviews provide a picture of the everyday life of the miner and the company coal town. Ms. _____ has worked previously on transcribing interviews relating to Boone County in our collection, and I have no doubt that she will do a good job with this current project.

Sincerely,

NKU
NORTHERN
KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITY

Department of History and Geography
Landrum Academic Center 415 Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099
tel 859.572.5461 | fax 859.572.6088
www.nku.edu

30 September 2008

Sarah Milligan, Program Officer
KENTUCKY ORAL HISTORY COMMISSION
Kentucky Historical Society
100 West Broadway
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Re: recommendation and endorsement letter

Dear Ms. Milligan,
Please accept this letter of support and endorsement for the Stearns/Blue Heron transcription project. First, having known Mrs. _____ for over two years, I heartily recommend her professionalism and integrity in regards to undertaking this project. Mrs. _____ has a deep personal as well as professional commitment to the dissemination of knowledge from oral sources. Second, as an historian of the sociocultural and political contexts of coal history, I heartily endorse this project for what it will make available to scholars, students, and activists. If I can provide any more supportive information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
